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criticism of the Fourth Gospel. That he was not convinced by the historical criticism of the Synoptic Gospels and so failed to give it recognition was probably due to the fact that in his later years he had not kept in sufficient touch with the scholarly literature upon them. Among New Testament scholars the interest and study have shifted during the present generation from the Johannine Gospel to the Synoptics, and the same kind of thoroughgoing objective historical criticism has been applied to them, with results which cannot be ignored by anyone who would interpret Jesus, even for practical moral and religious instruction. That New Testament scholars are in striking disagreement as to some of the results which this criticism yields, makes it the more difficult rather than the more easy for the homiletical expositor of Jesus' message to do his work.

Nevertheless, Dr. Clarke has produced a very readable and useful book. He finds and presents the enduring values of Jesus' teaching, and he clothes them in so fine a religious spirit as to radiate idealism and inspiration from his pages. It is a capital book for private reading, and for use with a Bible class. It is not second to any of the books that have recently been written to expound Jesus' message as a message for the present time.

C. W. VOTAW

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### RECENT BOOKS ON EARLY CHRISTIANITY

A few recent volumes treating the general subject of the origin and character of primitive Christianity are here brought together for review.<sup>1</sup>

D'Alviella contends for the principle of development in the history of Christian doctrine from the very beginning, in contrast with the

<sup>1</sup> *L'évolution du dogme catholique*. I. Les origines (Première Partie). Par Félix Goblet d'Alviella. Paris: Nourry, 1912. xv+347 pages. Fr. 6.

*Das Christentum in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten*. I. Band. Von H. Achelis. Leipzig: Quelle und Meyer, 1912. xii+295 pages. M. 10.

*Die Entstehung des Persönlichen Christentums der paulinischen Gemeinden*. Von Johannes Müller. Zweite, wohlfeile Ausgabe. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1911. 306 pages. M. 5.

*Hellenism and Christianity*. By Gerald Friedlander. London: Vallentine & Son, 1912. xii+221 pages. 4s. 6d.

*The Historical Setting of the Early Gospel*. By Thomas Cuming Hall. New York: Eaton & Mains, 1912. 171 pages. \$0.75.

*Taufe und Abendmahl im Urchristentum* (Religionsgeschichtliche Volksbücher. I. Reihe, 22-23 Heft). Von W. Heitmüller. Tübingen: Mohr, 1911. 84 pages. M. 1.30.

Catholic doctrine of the immutable church. Ritual and dogma have ever been subject to growth, and have been evolved in response to the demands of the religious life at different periods in history. Accordingly the author proposes to study the Catholic faith with reference to its successive stages and the social forces which have contributed to its formation. The first volume of these studies covers the period from the beginning of Jesus' public career to about 125 A.D. The subjects discussed are the life and teaching of Jesus, the activity of the primitive apostles, the work of Paul, the literature dependent upon Paul (Hebrews, I Peter, Revelation), synoptic tradition, and the Fourth Gospel. These topics are thought to mark five successive stages in the early evolution of Catholic doctrine.

For his critical views regarding Jesus and the gospels d'Alviella follows in the main the conclusions of Loisy, yet in some important respects his interpretations differ from those of Loisy. For example, the idea that Jesus became suddenly conscious of his messiahship at baptism is rejected, and in fact Jesus is thought never to have formulated the hypothesis of his messiahship. Much less is it probable that any of his contemporaries ever took him for the Messiah; that belief was a product of the resurrection faith (pp. 24 ff., 79 ff.). The burden of Jesus' preaching was like John's: the need for repentance since the kingdom was imminent. But in method Jesus differed widely from John, because of his very different conception of God. The God of John was the jealous and cruel Jehovah of the Old Testament, while Jesus preached a God of love and goodness. In line with this thought, he devoted his energies to the building-up of a new spiritual life in his hearers, since this alone could furnish the basis for any genuine repentance. In this effort to accomplish the moral renovation of Israel, Jesus aroused the fierce opposition of the Jews, who persuaded the Romans to put him to death as a dangerous individual.

As for early apostolic faith, it contained the notion of the imminent kingdom, as preached by Jesus, to which it added a new item, namely, the expectation of the Messiah in the person of the risen Jesus. To Paul belongs the credit of having started Christianity on its way to become a world-religion. While he is not to be called the founder of the new religion, his doctrine and his activity have contributed most significantly to the positive construction of Christian dogma. The keynote of Paulinism is the idea that all men are admitted into the kingdom of heaven on the sole condition of faith, which brings about the mystical union of the believer with Christ. Yet it is in the doctrine

of Jesus' death as a sacrifice making possible the salvation of mankind that the creative originality of Paul is thought to be best displayed. Hebrews and I Peter exhibit a type of thinking similar to Paul's, particularly in respect to the saving significance of Jesus' death. Revelation is also Pauline, though distinctive in its manner of conceiving the parousia. The principal contribution of the gospels to the history of dogma lies in their portrayal of the notion of Jesus' deification. Considerable progress in this direction had already been made in Mark's day. This tendency was further developed in Luke and Matthew, and reached its climax in John. "Already modified by apostolic tradition, distorted [*déformée*] successively by Paul (40-64 A.D.), by Mark (70 A.D.), Luke (90-100 A.D.), and Matthew (100 A.D.), the personality of the humble Galilean prophet becomes in the Fourth Gospel (125 A.D.) the incarnation of the logos, the eternal and universal reason of God" (p. 256).

In this evolution two main factors are evident as showing the character of early Christianity. It is found to be primarily a branch of Jewish religion; but also, as a result of its rejection of particularism, it appropriated certain phases of Hellenism in an effort to meet the demands of its new life. But this debt to Hellenism was mainly on the intellectual side, the appropriation of certain ideas like those of the logos to make Christian doctrine more attractive to the better educated classes. Still the essence of Christianity seems, according to d'Alviella's interpretation, to be distinctly a heritage from Judaism—a perpetuation of the ethical content of Jewish prophetism reaching its climax in the ethical religion of Jesus. If this is so, we can hardly think of Christianity in terms of evolution, for development can then affect only the outer phases of its life such as its rites and doctrines, while its inner character remains a fixed quantum established by Jesus. On the other hand, may we not question whether the ethical side of religion is not also the product of evolutionary forces, and whether the growth of Christianity on gentile soil is not much more vitally bound up with the actual life of the time than our author has felt it to be? Unfortunately he dismisses with a footnote the important question of the relation of Paul's sacramentalism to similar ideas in heathendom. It is hardly enough to say that "the absolute lack of documents does not permit a solution of these questions" (p. 203). We are promised a further discussion of Christianity's relation to the Greco-Roman world in the next volume, where it is to be hoped these important problems will be more adequately treated.

Achelis writes the history of early Christianity in terms of the growth of a *community*. Beginning with the first assembling of the disciples in Galilee after Jesus' death, the history is followed down to about the middle of the second century. The community in Jerusalem, the apostle Paul, the gentile Christian community, the end of Jewish Christianity, and the elimination of heathen features introduced by the Gnostics are the chief topics discussed. The author has written a very readable and informing volume, designed more for popular use than for the treatment of disputed problems. In fact he deliberately follows certain generally accepted positions, such, for example, as Wieseler's chronology, though he seems to think there is substantial evidence for the construction of new views. There is scarcely any reference made to the modern literature of the subject, although ancient sources are cited frequently. All this is in line with the author's aim to instruct and edify rather than to debate disputed points.

In general method, he works from within outward, from the center of the community to its circumference. He does not forget that early Christianity was surrounded by a very religious world from which in all probability it appropriated some things for itself. The significance which it attached to baptism and its interpretation of the Lord's Supper are found to have been affected at an early date by the sacramental notions current in heathen religions, but these external influences are not given a prominent place in the present treatment of the subject. Nor does the author seem to think they constituted any essential part of primitive Christianity. Its most vital element was an inner power resident in the community from the beginning, a power which impelled it to leave its oriental home to become a world-religion. Though the form of its existence changed, this secret of its life remained unchanged so that new influences coming into it from without did not dissolve it, but were themselves absorbed and transfused with new power by its own inherent strength. What, specifically, this essence was we are not told, but seemingly it is associated most closely with the religious personalities who inspired and directed the life of the early community. As time progressed the church lost much of its pristine power, by adopting organization in place of inspired personal leadership. In proportion as it attained greater organic strength did it lose in spiritual and religious power.

The period of prosperous growth in all directions was at an end. The primeval forest became a well-kept garden in which even the most vigorous trees had to drop their heads to be pruned and bound to props—there was no

longer any room for progress. Personalities of such unfathomable depth and fulness as the apostle Paul or the evangelist John did not appear again in the church. . . . The period of the apostles and prophets is the golden age of the Christian church [p. 279].

Müller's book is only a reprint of his *Das persönliche Christentum der Paulinischen Gemeinden*, which appeared in 1898, but it is of interest here because of its point of view. His emphasis upon the importance of approaching the study of early Christianity from the standpoint of inner development is most timely. He points out the insufficiency of a method which sees only the outer history on the one hand and the theological teaching on the other. Yet it is true, as Müller contends, that most students of the subject have been content to trace the course of events and expound the theological teaching of early Christianity, and have left the problem of the genesis of its inner life quite untouched. It is in this latter sphere that he would have us look for the essence of Christianity. But when he comes to define that essence he is less satisfactory, notwithstanding the many commendable features of his discussion. He is thoroughly critical in his use of the sources, and so employs only Romans, I and II Corinthians, Galatians, I Thessalonians, Philemon, and Philippians as first-hand sources of information for the earliest life of Christianity. From what we can learn of Paul and his community we may draw further conclusions about the life of Christians in general, but that task is of only secondary importance. The genesis of the Christian life as understood in the Pauline churches is the immediate object of investigation. We are told that we must not read into the religion of Paul our modern metaphysical conceptions and our modern notions of the primacy of ethical content of religion. The fundamental element in the personal Christianity of the Pauline communities is found to be the personal religious experience of believers. And what is the genesis of this experience? It results from the acceptance of Paul's preaching about the new life in Christ into which the new convert enters at the time of baptism. Thus the essential element in early Christianity was the believer's consciousness of participation in the life of the deity. Here Müller's inductive study ceases. When we ask him for the historical genesis of this notion of religion he gives us no answer, other than to imply that this experience was an ultimate, supernatural fact given to men from without—a divine endowment distinctive of Christianity. But this can hardly be the end of the whole matter. Christianity certainly was not distinctive in this respect, since contemporary religions were offering their votaries a similar

experience. And from the standpoint of genesis, one must further question why it was that religion at this time expressed itself so generally in these terms. Not only the psychological genesis but also the historical genesis of religious ideas must be traced.

Friedlander (who is not to be confused with the Friedländers of Germany) is especially interested in studying this historical genesis of early Christianity, and more particularly the origins of New Testament Christology. As a Jewish writer of the conservative and polemical school, he is naturally disposed to deny any vital relation between early Christian Christology and Jewish thought. Apart from the ethical heritage from Judaism, Christianity had in his opinion very little that was genuinely Jewish. It did borrow extensively from Hellenistic Judaism, but mainly such elements as the latter had taken over from Hellenism. To these, Christians added the distinctively heathen notion of the dying and rising Savior-Deity. "The adoption of the best teaching of Judaism made Christianity an ethical religion. The absorption of Greek philosophy adapted it to the educated Greek, while the inclusion of beliefs and rites borrowed from the Mystery-religions of Hellenism made Christianity acceptable to the lower classes of the heathens" (p. 53). The problems raised by Friedlander are certainly very important, but whether they can be solved so easily as he thinks is the question. His book does not do much to further our knowledge on these subjects, since it is mainly a compilation of opinions from other writers and does not deal at first hand with the original sources of information. And that even Palestinian Judaism was itself so much a thing apart from the influences of its own religious surroundings as Friedlander imagines needs stronger defense than this volume offers.

Hall appreciates the importance of studying early Christianity in its historical setting, but the present volume is not intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the many problems involved in such study. It is a popular presentation of the political, economic, and religious world of Jesus' day, and a survey of the relation of Christianity to the economic, political, and family life of its time. The purpose of the book does not allow reference to the original sources of information, though many of the most important modern books on the subject are cited. As a result of his brief survey the author concludes that the history of the church in the first three centuries was "a time of continuous and increasing clouding of the gospel. It was a time of compromise and unwitting surrender of many values. On the other hand it was a time

of great creative energy." This latter phase of its life appears in its contribution to the betterment of society throughout the Roman Empire, while it suffered deterioration by becoming a state institution. Thus the author feels that the essential in Christianity is not the product of this evolution, but some original kernel more or less obscured by the process of historical development. Removing those features which were superimposed by the passing stages of culture and the low level of contemporary intelligence, we have the essential message of Jesus to the effect that God was in life and had become incarnate in humanity. "The splendid faith of Christianity was that it had seen God in Christ Jesus and that God called men to be perfect as God was perfect."

Heitmüller, in an important monograph, studies the origin of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and their meaning for the Christianity of the New Testament period. This study is genetic, and takes into account not only the Jewish and Christian background of the time but also the Hellenistic. Regarding baptism, we are told that Jesus did not establish the ordinance either by his own practice or by specific command. It was taken up by the community after Jesus' death as a rite of purification and initiation. It had much the same significance as when used by John the Baptist, the chief difference being its connection with the name of Jesus Christ. As endowment by the spirit at this time came to be emphasized, the rite took on more of the sacramental notion such as adhered to similar rites in contemporary religions. The Lord's Supper had as its starting-point a recollection of the meal Jesus had eaten with the disciples on the night of his betrayal. He had laid stress upon two things at that time, fellowship with one another and fellowship with himself. These two fundamental ideas continued to be emphasized, but they were early supplemented. The idea of fellowship among the disciples fell into the background, and the notion of personal fellowship with Jesus was early formalized. The bread and wine became supernatural food—a genuine sacrament by which the participant united himself to the deity, as was the case with similar rites in other religions. But the fundamental significance of the Christian rite was ethical and has remained such, though sacramental influences have been connected with it from time to time dating even from the days of Paul.

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From Upsala comes a thoroughgoing discussion of the idea of reward and punishment in the religion of Paul.<sup>1</sup> The book is not easy reading (its style is not that of a native German), but it is worth some effort, and does a needed service. Over against those interpreters who emphasize the Jew in Paul and those others who emphasize the Greek in him, Wetter emphasizes the Christian. "Paulinism" is not rabbinical or eschatological or philosophical or sacramental; it is religious.

The book has three divisions: Paul's thought of punishment for sinners, of reward for the righteous, of justification by faith. Each section includes a detailed exegetical examination of all the passages concerned (the Pastorals are not used as Pauline), and discussion of the chief concepts involved, as "wrath (of God)," "judgment," and the like.

The divine wrath and judgment which are to fall on the world are taken over by Paul from his Jewish environment, but they have no real place in his original religious thought. For him God is grace, and "the wrath" is a sort of independent hypostasis, mechanically working out the doom of sin, not the anger and retaliation of the personal God. Out of this mechanical "world," the Christians are transferred into the sphere of personal relations with God, where wrath and judgment have no place. Similarly the idea of reward for right living is no part of Paul's religion; against just this theory of requital and compensation is directed Paul's whole argumentation concerning works of law. Paul's religion has no *Lohngedanken* whatever, and in this fact lies his fundamental break with Judaism. The "reward" of being a Christian is just being a Christian, is just the blessedness of the filial relation itself. Its usual expression is "(eternal) life"; it is "faith," it is "love," it is "righteousness." God has no "reward" for any of these things; they are themselves reward, not works to be rewarded. This is not Judaism, not Hellenism; it is Christianity. To be sure, to bring his own experience to intelligible expression, Paul must often use the language of rabbinic Judaism, of current eschatology, or (less often) of the Greek mysteries. But these are only forms of expression, never the thing to be expressed.

Especially interesting, in view of Schweitzer's contentions, is Wetter's insistence that eschatology, while not consciously rejected by Paul, is no real part of his religion. What he now has as a Christian is his chief concern, rather than what the future is to bring. In this Wetter

<sup>1</sup> *Der Vergeltungsgedanke bei Paulus. Eine Studie zur Religion des Apostels.* Von Gillis P. Wetter. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1912. 199 pages. M. 4.80.

is doubtless right. But Schweitzer is right too. "It is one of the tasks of our time to learn to know the whole Paul" (p. 185); to this end Wetter makes a genuine contribution, which, along with those of Schweitzer, Reitzenstein, Wrede, and many others, must find a place in the complete synthetic account of Paul's religion which someone, some day, will give us.

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To his seven useful volumes on the origins and Scriptures of Christianity, Dr. Gilbert has added an eighth, and the most valuable of all.<sup>1</sup> It is the best popular study of Jesus and the gospels in our language, and should do much to "further the Jesus-type of religious life" by furthering "an intelligent acquaintance with Jesus himself," which is the author's ambition. Most admirable are the method and the attitude to the material. "No ecclesiastical authority or institutional connection has been present to influence, either for good or for ill, the weighing of evidence, or the portrayal of results."

This independence is seen in the threefold division of the presentation. First "the sources" are treated and their historic contribution estimated, then "the historical Jesus" is pictured in a positive and persuasive sketch, to which succeeds a frank and helpful treatment of "the legendary Jesus." The material of the latter division includes the birth-stories, the bulk of the miracles, and the legend of the material resurrection. It is a great service to have a scholar of Dr. Gilbert's standing and reverent sanity give up the hopeless attempt to present these portions of the gospel story as transcripts of fact, whether natural or supernatural, and write simply and without embarrassment above them the caption "Legend." This is an enormous relief to the church, and lets some of the most characteristic and significant New Testament passages come for the first time into their own.

The fine discussion of the sources begins with what is really a valuable monograph on the synoptic problem; the material is freshly presented, with many original suggestions, and for a combination of critical acumen with concise yet clear statement there is nothing better at hand. The Fourth Gospel is properly not used as a source for the history of Jesus, and the reasons for this are given adequately and convincingly.

In the biographical portion of the book, valuable is the opening chapter, on "The World in Which Jesus Lived." The following chapters seek to establish what historic data are yielded by a careful critical

<sup>1</sup> *Jesus*. By George Holley Gilbert. New York: Macmillan, 1912. xii+321 pages. \$1.50 net.

examination, first of the *Logia*, then of Mark. The emphasis on the primary importance of *Logia*-testimony, as really autobiographical and so of the highest reliability, is an excellent feature of Dr. Gilbert's method here. Sometimes, of course, his exegetical results will not commend themselves to all scholars. The point at which exception will most certainly be taken is the view of Jesus' messiahship, which Gilbert understands in a religious sense in which eschatology is largely eliminated.

[Jesus'] ideal was widely unlike the popular dream of a messianic kingdom. The most that they had in common was that both looked toward a better state in Israel. But one was prevailingly outward, political, national; the other prevailingly inner, spiritual, and therefore essentially universal in its scope. The one was to be realized from without, the other from within. Whether Jesus, at any time, thought that this spiritual ideal would work itself out in a new and glorious Jewish state, there is no evidence to determine in an absolute manner [p. 166].

Finally, "the career of Jesus as a character of history terminated at an unknown tomb near Jerusalem" (p. 236). That tomb was probably never found empty, nor was the body of Jesus ever seen after its burial. But the testimony of all the data is conclusive for "a spiritual vision of the risen Jesus by his disciples," a vision which made them believe that which we also believe, that Jesus continued to live after his crucifixion. And "the abiding foundation of that belief is not material—an empty tomb, a reanimated physical body—but it is spiritual" (p. 307).

The book closes with a series of unusually detailed and valuable indexes. May it have a hearty welcome and a wide reading throughout the churches and the schools of theological study. We all owe Dr. Gilbert a debt of gratitude.

MEADVILLE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

CLAYTON RAYMOND BOWEN

### IMPORTANT STUDIES IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION

The science of religion has barely won recognition as a science. The pioneers in the subject have not been many years dead. Scholars of the second generation are still with us. To them indeed has fallen much of the brunt of the work involved in winning recognition for their subject. Thus when one of them gives to the world, as M. Goblet d'Alviella has recently done,<sup>1</sup> the articles and reviews written by him in

<sup>1</sup> *Croyances, Rites, Institutions*. Par Comte Goblet d'Alviella, Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1911. 3 vols. Tome I. "Hierographie" (Archéologie et histoire religieuse). xx+386 pages; Tome II. "Hierologie" (Questions de méthode et d'origines). 412 pages; Tome III. "Hierosophie" (Problèmes du temps présent). 386 pages.